

THE COLONIAL NEWSLETTER

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No. 1

At the recent ANA convention in Boston a few of us who are especially interested in Early American and State coins decided to establish a newsletter specifically for the specialist in these series. As the idea is not new, it is felt that it would be best received if it took this form, as in indication of the type of information we believe it should contain.

The objective of this newsletter is to provide in permanent form an exchange of information, opinions, data and discoveries concerning Early American coins and coinage, particularly with respect to die varieties. We feel the use of photographs will be worthwhile and they will be used whenever possible.

This newsletter will not be sold. It will be available to those of us who have the interest and willingness to make periodic contributions.

The circulation of this newsletter will remain very small. However, with the interest of only a few more individuals this will become a useful medium of communication and an asset both to us and the science.

Your support is needed! Please send your comments and write-ups for the next issue to:

THE COLONIAL NEWSLETTER
P.O. Box 114
Wayland, Massachusetts

THE HIBERNIA-VOCE POPULI COINAGE OF 1760

The coins known as the Voce Populi pieces were quite probably struck in the year 1760, just after the death of King George II. The dies were engraved by Mr. Roche of King Street, Dublin, who was at the time engaged in manufacturing buttons for the army. The Voce Populi pieces have on the obverse the laureated bust of a man surrounded by the word Voce Populi. On some varieties the letter P is found in various locations.

It has been suggested that these coins were intended to represent Prince Charles Edward, the young Pretender; the initial P being in that case used for "Princeps" and the issue would

thus act as a counterblast to the claims of George II to the crown of England.

The real explanation of the mystery, however, seems to be given in pamphlet No. 428 in the Harleian Library where the following interesting statement appears:

"The Irish halfpence, Voce Populi, 1760, were struck in two different dies, in consequence of the delay they suffered in the receipt of a coinage from England, the head is that of Hely Hutchinson afterwards provost of Dublin College, etc., etc."

It is possible that the letter P may indicate Provost. If the date of Hutchinson's appointment as Provost were known, it could solve the problem.

Half pennies with the inscription VOX POPULI are recorded in Pinkerton's ESSAY ON MEDALS, 1789, and Lindsay's VIEW OF THE COINAGE OF IRELAND, 1839. The existence of these coins, however, is highly problematical and the coins have not been seen or recorded in recent years. The coinage of halfpennies as listed in THE COINAGE OF IRELAND by Dr. Philip Nelson, 1905, consists of twelve different varieties. He lists two different varieties of the farthings. All of the pieces in this series are dated 1760.

The one exception to the above is the halfpenny dated 1700 as listed and illustrated on page 50 of the GUIDE BOOK OF U.S. COINS. This piece has been the cause of much speculation about its origin and whether or not the piece was actually dated 1700. A careful examination of the date on this coin leaves no alternative but to conclude that the date was actually intended to be 1700. The specimen illustrated in the GUIDE BOOK was discovered by Richard Picker about four years ago. The piece compares exactly to a second specimen which is in the British Museum.

The specimen listed and illustrated in Nelson's book as No. 10 proves to be struck from the same dies but at a later time when the date had been crudely

altered to 1760. The tail of the 6 is crowded into the exergual line in a manner so that one could only conclude that this was done as an afterthought. A logical explanation of this piece would be that the 1700 coin is a contemporary counterfeit probably a direct copy of Nelson No. 9 which has a date that was placed too high in the exergue and with a little wear might appear as 1700. The counterfeiter probably realized his mistake after circulating a few of his 1700 coins and altered the date to read 1760. At least two examples of the 1700 coin and two examples with the date altered to 1760 are known to exist. The counterfeit pieces probably circulated in the Colonies with numerous other counterfeit halfpence and Bungtown tokens.

Ken Bressett

During the past few years interest in the "Colonial" field of numismatics has mounted to a degree of popularity not enjoyed by this series in many decades. Of the many new serious collectors of this series, a few are engaged in considerable research which has produced material sufficient to revise the authoritative books used in the past. In Massachusetts copper series alone at least ten new die varieties and combinations have been discovered.

One of the biggest problems facing the researchers in "Colonials" today is the absence of photographs and descriptions of these new discoveries. Such was the case three weeks ago when I came across an unusual Massachusetts cent. Within a few minutes I found that it was unlisted in both Crosby's "Early Coins of America" and Millen-Ryder's "The State Coinages of New England". This coin did not match any photographs that I have nor any written description that I was able to check, nor were any of my correspondents able to help me. Before labeling this a "new" discovery I had to locate owners of other recent discoveries and check this coin against theirs. It was during this search that I found that my coin had been discovered previously and that there were now four other specimens known, of which this is perhaps the second or third finest. All of this process took many days, several long drives to view other collections and a good number of long distance telephone calls.

In an attempt to make someone else's task a little easier, I am submitting to the "*Colonial*

Newsletter" for publication, a photograph and the following description of the Massachusetts Cent, 1788 to be known as Ryder 15 M

C O M wide, MM close; the top of the bow rises to 3/4 the height of N; one ray of mullet (star) points just above the collar, the feather-end of the arrow under upright of E, arrowhead two lengths below tunic, the bowstring is close to, but does not touch the handgrip of the bow. The shaft of the arrow is slightly to the left of an imaginary bisecting line through the arrowhead. This coin possesses two outstanding characteristics not found on any other Massachusetts Cent of 1788 . . . the first is the fact that there are two folds of the tunic completely to the right of the Indian's left leg (observer's right) PLATE; and the second characteristic is a difference in the Indian's hair. On all specimens of 1788 Cents, the hair falls within the V collar on the shoulder, but on this obverse more than half of the hair is located to the right of the collar. See Plate.

A. R. Beaudreau

Of interest is a newly discovered Vermont reverse die dated 1788. It is combined with the VERMON. AUCTORI. obverse which is shown by Ryder Nos. 14, 20, 21, 22, 23, 34 and 36. A description of this reverse follows: Legend INDE ET LIB. Distance between DE is greater than that between IN or ND in INDE. Branch hand points to right side of D. Branch short with a few distinct leaves, the upper left leaf very close to the bottom left corner of E. Distance between T of ET and L of LIB only slightly larger than spacing between other letters. B close to dateline, closer than on any other Vermont reverse. Dateline is double, the upper one being heavier. Datelines are very straight and parallel. Dic break joins right part of upper dateline and edge. Date rather uniform, 8's tilt slightly to the right, 17 more widely spaced than the rest of the date. 1 appears to be connected at the top by a small break to the right, connecting lower dateline. The coin weighs 103 gr. and logically will be known as Ryder 37.

An advanced die state of the Vermont Ryder 20 (BB-16) reverse has been noted. The die is buckled in a roughly circular area between the neck, branch, left knee and top of shield giving a distinctly thicker



Ryder 37



1788 Obverse 15

coin within this area. A fine die break or crease is present extending from the milling opposite the nose, curving through the center of the forehead and terminating at the pole just below the hand.

A. D. Hoch

Several months ago while attributing some Massachusetts cents, I fortunately came across one with an obverse 4 of 1787 and a reverse I of 1788.

Although there have been quite a few new discoveries in the last several years, eleven in all to my knowledge, I believe this one to represent something extra and major.

By extra, I mean that is the first piece in this series to have dies of two different years combined, whereas the varieties of Connecticut, New Jersey and Vermont enjoyed such combinations ever since they were collected by varieties. (by "dies of different years" I do not necessarily mean that they were "cut" or made in different years but that they are listed under this classification.)

Also, this combination sheds a great deal of light on the "arrangement of the dies". By deciphering it, the obverse 4 would be the last obverse die of 1787 and the reverse I would be the first reverse die of 1788. Therefore, the obverse 12 of 1788 would be

considered the first obverse die of that year since it is found in combination with the I reverse. Progress could also be made with the C, D, and J reverses of 1787 and the majority of the 1788 reverses and obverses.

As yet, I have come across two pieces of this combination: the discovery piece (no longer in my possession); and a specimen in the collection of the Massachusetts Historical Society, the latter being the better of the two.

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AN UNKNOWN ALBANY CHURCH PENNY ?

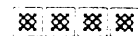
In 1790, the First Presbyterian Church of Albany proposed that coins be struck with the words "Church Penny" stamped on them. Supposedly, one thousand, in uniface style, were struck. These pieces are generally referred to as a "necessity coinage".

The one in question has the same legend but with a "D" added. As for what the D represents, I cannot say.

The piece shown is in the collection of the Massachusetts Historical Society.

Philip D. Greco

See Plate p. 5 





1787 Obv. 4



1788 Rev. 1



MHS Coll.



Albany Church Penny